

Message Text

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ORIGIN SPTA-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 176683

STADIS/////////////////
FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, EWWT, US, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMA CANAL TREATY IMPLEMENTATION

REF: A) PANAMA 4688, 3) STATE 156634

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED YOUR REACTION TO OUR PRO-
POSALS REGARDING HIGH-LEVEL COORDINATION WITH REGARD TO PA-
NAMA CANAL TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. WE WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE
IN SOMEWHAT GREATER DEPTH THE ISSUES YOU HAVE OUTLINED,
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON NEAR TERM MECHANISMS FOR COOR-
DINATION PRIOR TO THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE TREATY. EXPE-
RIENCE WITH THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE'S PRECURSOR, THE
CONSULTATIVE GROUP DESCRIBED IN REF B, WILL BE IMPORTANT
IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE CONSULTATIVE
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COMMITTEE UNDER ARTICLE XII AFTER OCTOBER 1, 1979.

2. FIRST, WE WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO INTEN-
TION ON OUR PART TO DOWNGRADE THE ROLES OF THE AMBASSADOR
AND EMBASSY IN ANY PART OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. THE
AMBASSADOR'S ROLE AS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESI-
DENT IS CRUCIAL BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE TREATY COMES INTO

EFFECT, PARTICULARLY WHEN PAN CANAL AND USSOUTHCOM BEGIN TO OPERATE IN TERRITORY UNDER PANAMANIAN JURISDICTION. WE WOULD EXPECT, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD BE A

MEMBER OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP'S US ELEMENT, AN ELEMENT WHICH WOULD BE MORE ACTIVE THAN THE GROUP AS A WHOLE AND WHICH, AS NECESSARY, COULD MEET INDEPENDENTLY OF THE PANAMANIAN MEMBERS. WE VISUALIZE THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP AS INCLUDING THE AMBASSADOR, AS PRC CHAIRMAN; AMBASSADOR POPPER AS THE SECRETARY'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR TREATY AFFAIRS; AND GENERAL DOLVIN AS THE SENIOR DOD REPRESENTATIVE.

3. EVERY PAPER WE HAVE PREPARED IN WASHINGTON WITH RESPECT TO IMPLEMENTING MACHINERY HAS SOUGHT TO SAFEGUARD THE AMBASSADOR'S POSITION. FURTHER, WE HAVE ENDORSED TO OMB YOUR VIEW THAT OUR THREE PRINCIPAL REPRESENTATIVES IN PANAMA SHOULD WORK THROUGH THE PANAMA REVIEW COMMITTEE, (PRC) UNDER THE AMBASSADOR'S CHAIRMANSHIP. WE SUPPORT THE STRENGTHENED PRC, AND WE HOPE IT AND YOUR ROLE CAN BE STRENGTHENED WITH SUITABLE TERMS OF REFERENCE. THE PRC WOULD, AS YOU SUGGEST, BE THE LOCAL USG DECISION-MAKING BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES.

4. IF WE SUCCEED IN GETTING THIS STRENGTHENED PRC STRUCTURE SET UP, WE SEE NO REASON WHY, EVEN DURING THE PERIOD

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PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, 1979, THE BULK OF THE PROBLEMS THAT ARISE CONCERNING PANAMA AND INVOLVING PRC DIFFERENCES SHOULD NOT BE SETTLED ON THE SPOT. WE WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO SEE THIS HAPPEN.

5. IT IS OUR JUDGMENT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE THE CASE CONCERNING OUR DEALINGS WITH THE GOP AND ITS VARIOUS AGENCIES. WE BELIEVE THAT, WITH THE BEST WILL IN THE WORLD ON ALL SIDES, THERE ARE BOUND TO BE SOME ISSUES WHICH THE GOP WILL INEVITABLY RAISE WITH WASHINGTON. THESE WOULD BE ISSUES, WE EMPHASIZE, WHICH YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES ON THE PRC HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DISPOSE OF. WE WILL WANT TO RESTRICT THIS PANAMANIAN TENDENCY TO THE EXTENT WE CAN, BUT WE EXPECT THAT THESE ISSUES WILL ARISE. IN THIS SENSE, THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP MECHANISM WE HAVE IN MIND OFFERS A LOGICAL MEANS OF MAKING AVAILABLE TO PANAMA A SECOND RESORT PROCEDURE WHICH COULD BE USEFUL IN CHANNELING THE GOP RECOURSE TO WASHINGTON AS WELL AS PROVIDING FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ENVISAGED IN REF B.

6. WE EXPECT THAT OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP WILL HELP IN DETERMINING WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRECISE

COMPOSITION OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AFTER THE TREATY COMES INTO EFFECT. BUT WE DOUBT THAT FROM OUR STANDPOINT, THE BEST RESULTS WOULD BE ACHIEVED IF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WERE TO BE COMPOSED OF THE SAME INDIVIDUALS (I.E. THE PRC) WHO WOULD BE HANDLING DAILY ONGOING OPERA-

TIONS AND PROBLEMS IN THE CANAL AREA.

7. WHILE TREATY IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS ARE FORTUNATELY PROCEEDING WITHOUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS AT THE MOMENT, WE WOULD LIKE TO BE FULLY PREPARED FOR ISSUES BOUND TO ARISE LATER. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR US AT THIS END TO MEET WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WITH YOU, YOUR PANCANAL AND SOUTHCOM COLLEAGUES, AND LEADING PANAMANIAN TREATY CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPLEMENTATION OFFICIALS. WE WILL SEND YOU OUR FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THIS SUBJECT SHORTLY. CHRISTOPHER

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